

Tearing Down Walls

And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Mark 2:15-17 (KJV) 



We should understand the circumstances of Christ sitting with these men. He did not crash some party they were throwing, but word spread that Christ and His disciples were in that house and they came in droves just to be close to Him. There are people in this world that truly hunger for truth and righteousness, who are irresistibly drawn to Christ despite their sinful condition. When they found the 'real deal' they could not resist it. Are you the real deal? Do men see Christ when they look at you, or something else?

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Matthew 5:6 (KJV) 

During this holiday season many people who normally would never step inside a church are doing so. Some may do it out of tradition, some to please spouses or relatives or for a myriad of other reasons. Many of us will congregate in homes with people we don't normally socialize with during the year.

There are so many things that we allow to divide us, politics, religion, social status to name a few, yet Christ gave us a great example to follow in the above passage. All men and especially Christians need to learn what true tolerance is, and practice it daily in our lives. If anyone had the right to be offended by their company was it not Christ in this crowd? Yet this sinless man associated with the most vile of sinners.

And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

Luke 23:39-41 (KJV) 

I truly pity the wretched man who thinks himself better than any another, whether it be for the sake of money, status or salvation. We shall all stand before God accountable for our deeds. It is natural for the regenerated man to be repulsed by sin even as a part of him is still drawn to it. Yet we cannot allow ourselves to be offended by the sin of others to the point that we cannot tolerate being in their presence. How will the captive know the joy of being set free if not exposed to those who are?

Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

Matthew 18:32-35 (KJV)

In **Matthew 18:21-35** we find an important truth that Christ reveals to Peter about forgiveness. All of us have had people in our lives who we have difficulty forgiving. Perhaps they have wronged us, or maybe our personalities clash. Perhaps they are simply living in a sinful state that we find offensive. No matter which it is the answer is still the same. We have no right to look down on a fellow sinner.

For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

James 2:10 (KJV)

The above verse is a really tough pill to swallow for some of us, acknowledging that we are all equally guilty of transgressing the law. It is our sin nature that causes us to compare ourselves to others, it is in fact proof of our inherent sin nature that we even entertain such thoughts! We all owe that debt of ten thousand talents to God, who are we to judge another man's servant?

That is not to say that we shouldn't warn our brothers and sisters who have fallen into habitual sin, but as fellow sinners it should be done with **Compassion Not Condemnation**. What I am asking you to do is this; Take an account of those around you this holiday season, those who you might not even consciously realize you are holding a grudge against. Let that resentment go, ask God to help you if you need to that's why He is our friend. Put a hand on their shoulder and a smile on your face and let that love of Christ be shown through you.

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

1 Corinthians 13:13 (KJV)

So regardless of why we don't like to interact with some people let's try something different. If we make an effort to show the love of Christ to everyone around us not only in this holiday season but every day of the year, perhaps like Christ at the banquet we will be surrounded with hungry souls! God bless you all!

